

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2501

Introduced by Assembly Member Diaz

February 21, 2002

An act to add Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 14020) to Division 7 of the Unemployment Code, relating to community technology centers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2501, as introduced, Diaz. Community Technology Center Competitive Grant Program.

The California Workforce Investment Act states the findings and declarations of the Legislature that California should deliver comprehensive workforce preparation services to jobseekers, students, and employers through a system of one-stop career centers.

This bill would establish the Community Technology Center Competitive Grant Program to be administered by the California Workforce Investment Board for the purposes of training state residents, students, and businesses about various aspects of technology, including maximizing the use and benefits offered by technology. The bill would require the board to award grants for funding community technology centers that meet specified eligibility criteria based on an applicant's merit, need, geographic location, and ability to fulfill the goals of the program.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature in enacting these provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 14020) is added to Division 7 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, to read:

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY CENTERS

14020. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Community technology centers offer neighborhood residents the opportunity to do the following:

(1) Learn to use computers.

(2) Have access to the Internet.

(3) Receive training in word processing, graphic design, and other marketable skills.

(4) Use these resources to find information and services and to communicate with others, while simultaneously receiving assistance.

(b) Although California leads the nation in producing information technology, many of its residents are without access to that technology and therefore disadvantaged in the job market. In the year 2000, 56.6 percent of households in California owned a computer. The state ranked 11th in the nation in terms of computer ownership rates by households. California is ranked 10th in the nation in terms of households that are connected to the Internet, with only 46.7 percent of the households in the state having Internet access.

(c) Community technology centers serve those groups that do not have access to the Internet at home and provide a gateway for youth to access a skill set that is becoming more and more necessary for successful competition in the job marketplace.

(d) Community centers that are trusted and familiar places in neighborhoods are capable of attracting people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn about and use technology.

(e) Investing in community centers can result in building a technology resource in low-income communities that helps other institutions, such as businesses, schools, labor unions, and health centers, to use technology effectively.

14021. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

1 (a) “Board” means the California Workforce Investment
2 Board.

3 (b) “Program” means the Community Technology Center
4 Competitive Grant Program.

5 (c) “Community technology center” means a
6 community-based, nonprofit organization that is exempt from
7 taxation under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and
8 engaged in diffusing technology in local communities and training
9 local communities in the use of technology, especially in local
10 communities that otherwise would have no access or limited
11 access to the Internet and other technologies.

12 14022. There is hereby established the Community
13 Technology Center Competitive Grant Program to be
14 administered by the California Workforce Investment Board.

15 14023. The program is established for purposes that include,
16 but not limited to, all of the following:

17 (a) Train residents of this state so they can obtain marketable
18 technology skills that will help them to gain access to higher wage
19 earning jobs within the new economy.

20 (b) Train students in technology.

21 (c) Train and enable residents of this state to use technology to
22 help simplify tasks in their everyday lives and use computer-based
23 resources to allow them access to information on possible career
24 paths and employment availability.

25 (d) Train individuals in an effort to enable communities,
26 including local businesses, labor unions, community
27 organizations, and institutions to use technology that will
28 streamline their operating systems and help maximize their profit,
29 productivity, effectiveness, and success so they can participate
30 more effectively in markets within the state, the nation, and within
31 the global economy.

32 (e) Provide community members, especially those of lower
33 income, with access to e-government.

34 (f) Provide a safe, positive environment for children and youth,
35 particularly during after-school hours when they are most at risk.

36 (g) Build and strengthen community collaborations and public
37 and private partnerships.

38 14024. (a) (1) The California Workforce Investment Board
39 shall develop and administer within their competitive grant
40 application process program award grants for the purpose of

1 funding community technology centers. The process shall specify
2 eligibility criteria consistent with the provisions of this chapter. In
3 awarding grants, the board shall consider an applicant's merit,
4 need, geographic location, and ability to fulfill the goals of the
5 program.

6 (2) A community technology center is eligible to be considered
7 for a grant if its application states the following about the center:

8 (A) It has the capacity to serve as a technology resource in its
9 local community and to provide open-access hours for local
10 residents.

11 (B) It provides technology skills training targeted to existing
12 workforce needs.

13 (C) It has a staff qualified to manage technology center
14 operations.

15 (D) It has a comprehensive community outreach program.

16 (b) Grant funds shall be provided to each grantee, in an amount
17 not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) each year
18 for up to three years, to match nonstate monetary or in-kind
19 resources on a 50 percent basis, in order to help the grantee obtain
20 contributions from local, federal, foundation, or other private
21 sources.

22 (c) Maximum flexibility shall be given to grantees to meet the
23 purposes outlined in Section 14023, in order to encourage
24 innovative programs.

25 (d) Grants provided under this section may be awarded over a
26 period of up to three consecutive years, with the state's
27 contribution decreasing in accordance with declines in ongoing
28 program costs.

29 (e) The board shall report on this program annually to the
30 Legislature.

31 (f) The board may use state funds appropriated to it,
32 contributions from nonstate sources, reimbursements, and federal
33 funds. The board shall endeavor to coordinate funding from other
34 state departments so that these funds may be available in the most
35 efficient and effective manner for the purpose of expanding
36 awareness of technology and providing training in this field to
37 adults and youth. The board shall actively involve its youth council
38 in funding decisions for programs geared to youth.

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